DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 470 351 SO 034 390

AUTHOR	MacDonald, David
TITLE	Did Rome Fall or Was It Pushed? Sixth Grade Lesson. Schools of California Online Resources for Education (SCORE): Connecting California's Classrooms to the World.
INSTITUTION	San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, CA.
PUB DATE	1999-00-00
NOTE	9p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Schools of California Online Resources for Education, San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, 601 North East Street, San Bernardino, CA 92410-3093. E-mail: webmaster@score.rims.k12.ca.us; Web site: http://score.rims.k12.ca.us.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom - Learner (051) -- Guides - Classroom - Teacher (052)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Academic Standards; Ancient History; Cooperative Learning; European History; Foreign Countries; Grade 6; *Interdisciplinary Approach; Intermediate Grades; Internet; Language Arts; *Primary Sources; *Social Studies; Special Needs Students; State Standards; Western Civilization; World History
IDENTIFIERS	California; Europe (West); *Roman Empire

ABSTRACT

In this interdisciplinary grade 6 world history and language arts unit, students examine the fall of Rome (Italy). Working in teams to research the causes of Rome's demise, participants develop a theory explaining why Rome fell. The student guide provides detailed instructions on how to complete the activity, a list of resources, and includes Internet sites. The teacher's guide ties the unit to California state standards, provides adaptations for special needs students, and provides suggestions on how to conduct and evaluate the unit. (RJC)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 470 351

Schools of California Online Resources for Education (SCORE): Connecting California's Classrooms to the World

Did Rome Fall or was it Pushed?

Sixth Grade Lesson
by David MacDonald

SCORE
San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools
601 North E. Street
San Bernardino, CA 92410-3093

http://score.rims.k12.ca.us/activity/rome/

1999

SO 034 390

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

M. Hill

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

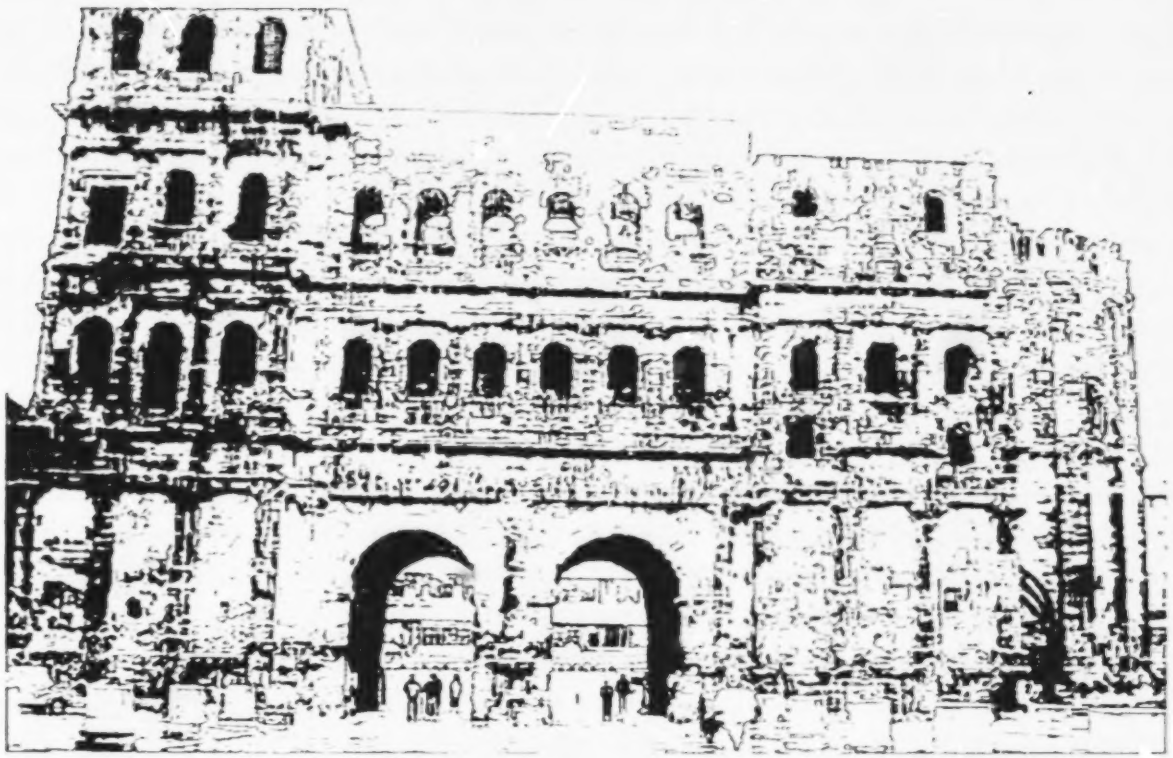
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.



4th C. BC - Trier Germany San Jose State University Museum

DID ROME FALL, OR WAS IT PUSHED?

Like any great empire that has come before or after it, the theories surrounding the fall of Rome are many. Since the empire crumbled, all other great empires or nations have been compared to Rome, with many coming up short. For many, understanding the fall of Rome is the key to the survival of our great nation, the United States. For much of this century, the U.S. has been compared to the Roman Empire in about every conceivable way. There are those who say that we are following the same path to destruction as the ancient Romans. So, why did Rome fall? Could their fate have been averted, and if so, would the world be different today? The answer lies in what you think after you have looked at all the facts. Let's examine what we know. We know the great empire known as Rome no longer exists. Now let's look at what we don't know:

1. Did plagues reduce the population to the point it could not sustain itself?
2. Did civil wars lessen the strength of the empire and weaken the population?
3. Did the army lose its discipline and thus endanger the empire and cause it to be overrun?
4. Did the citizens of Rome become too satisfied and lazy, allowing the empire to crumble due to neglect?
5. Did the empire bureaucracy become too top heavy, eventually causing the empire to collapse upon itself?
6. Did God turn His favor away from Rome due to its sinful nature?
7. Did it fall as the result of barbarian invasions?
8. Did the empire spend too much of its resources on the poor, thus drawing away precious funds from the empire?
9. Was the Roman Empire just too big, making a collapse inevitable?

THE TASK

Your team is assigned the task of researching the reasons for the fall of Rome and coming to a conclusion as to why it did. As you investigate, be sure to consider and compare your research to the status of the United States. Look at each question carefully and answer it with an eye on both the past and the present. As George Santayana said, "Those who forget the past are doomed to repeat it."

THE PROCESS

Be sure to stay within this framework:

A. Divide the research questions amongst yourselves as you are working on this as a team. All within the group need to participate. The more opinions you have the better, as this will assist in reaching a reasonable conclusion.

B. Within your team, you should come up with a list of general reasons why you feel a large empire or country might fall.

C. When finished, each team member should advance a theory as to why Rome fell.

D. Organize your recommendations into a presentation to be presented to a panel of world history experts. These experts will judge your conclusions based on appropriateness, thoroughness, and quality.

E. Lastly, you should include a short written summary of any comparisons you discover between the reasons for the fall of Rome and what might happen to the United States.

RESOURCES

The Fall of Rome

www.tamos.net/~rhay/romefall.html

The Fall of Rome

http://mars.acnet.wnec.edu/~grempel/courses/wc1/lectures/14romefell.html

LEARNING ADVICE

It is your job to research these questions fully and develop sound theories to describe the reasons for the fall of Rome. A possible scenario would be to eliminate those theories that can't be supported by fact and focus on the ones that can be fully supported with your research. It is also important to look for facts and not opinions. While no one yet knows for sure why Rome fell, there are many more opinions than facts. Your job is to separate the two. When comparing Rome to the United States, be sure to look for similarities in the problems that led to the fall of Rome to problems in our present day society.

EVALUATION

Your work will be assessed based on the thoroughness of your research, the accuracy of your conclusions, and the quality of your presentation. Develop a

scoring rubric in class that describes the characteristics of a good project in each of these areas.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this activity is to try to determine the cause(s) for the fall of the Roman Empire. Once you have reached your conclusion(s), some questions deserve to be answered. Should we compare the fall of Rome to other countries such as the U.S. or is each situation unique unto itself? Does the past really hold clues to the future? Should we base future decisions on events from the past?

REFLECTIONS

After considering the work you've completed, pick two of the three questions to answer as part of your evaluation.

What similarities exist between Rome and the United States?

Do you feel the United States is in the process of decline as a nation?

Assume for the minute that the U.S. is declining in a manner similar to Rome. How would you stop the slide and return the U.S. to its prior greatness?

TEACHER NOTES

Grade/Unit

Grade 7 Rome and Fall of Rome

Length of Lesson

One to two weeks should allow your students plenty of time to research and produce reasonable conclusions.

Materials Needed

Internet access as well as access to CD-ROM encyclopedias, preferably one similar to World Book 97/98, which has links to the Internet embedded in it.

Lesson Purpose

To understand the dynamics of a past empire with a focus on its destruction and the comparison of that destruction to present nations.

Standards

History-Social Science Contetn Standards Grade 7: Students describe and analyze the factors contributing to the development of ancient Rome and its enduring contribution to Western Civilization. Compare and contrast the views of historians on the reasons for the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, and how Romans explained their problems at the time.

History-Social Science Thinking Skills: Students frame questions that can be answered by historical research. Students access primary and secondary sources, read and then draw sound conclusions.

Language Arts Standards Grade 6 Reading Comprehension: Reading grade appropriate material, students describe and connect the essential ideas, arguments, and perspectives of text and relate text structure, organization and purpose.

Listening and Speaking Strategies: Students deliver focused, coherent presentations that convey ideas clearly and relates to the background and interests of the audience.

Information Literacy Skills

- Recognize need for information to solve problem
- Brainstorms multiple strategies for approaching a problem or issue
- Identifies, organizes and sequences tasks to complete an information based project
- Creates and organizes an effective research team
- Interprets history-social science data
- Reads and creates a logical interpretation of data derived from many different kinds of sources
- Relates historical events, people and eras
  Analyzes cause and effect
- Creates a logical argument in writing or speaking supported with relevant evidence

Setup for the Presentations

The judging panel for the presentations can be made up of any faculty members, as this will give added weight to the student's conclusions. Try to encourage your students to embrace a variety of answers, as the fall of Rome cannot be attributed to any one thing but to a multitude of problems.

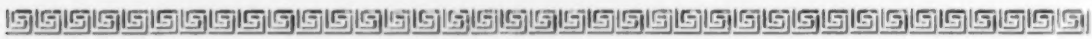
Interdisciplinary Connections
Language Arts
For extensions have students display their results in a variety of means such as art, music or poetry.

Adaptations for Special Needs Students

1. Allow students to work in both pairs and groups as this might assist or aid some students better.
2. Lengthen or shorten the amount of time to accomplish the task depending on the needs and abilities of students.
3. For those LEP students it would be helpful for the instructor to pre-select certain vocabulary ahead of time that might be difficult for those new to the English language.
4. Modify or eliminate sections or assignments as needs of students dictates.

Credits

Author, David MacDonald
Fillmore Middle School
Fillmore USD
Region 8 & 11 Professional Development Consortium-SCORE Institute 1997
dmac@mail.fillmore.k12.ca.us



Revised 3/10/99

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

NOTICE

Reproduction Basis

X	This document is covered by a signed "Reproduction Release (Blanket)" form (on file within the ERIC system), encompassing all or classes of documents from its source organization and, therefore, does not require a "Specific Document" Release form.
	This document is Federally-funded, or carries its own permission to reproduce, or is otherwise in the public domain and, therefore, may be reproduced by ERIC without a signed Reproduction Release form (either "Specific Document" or "Blanket").